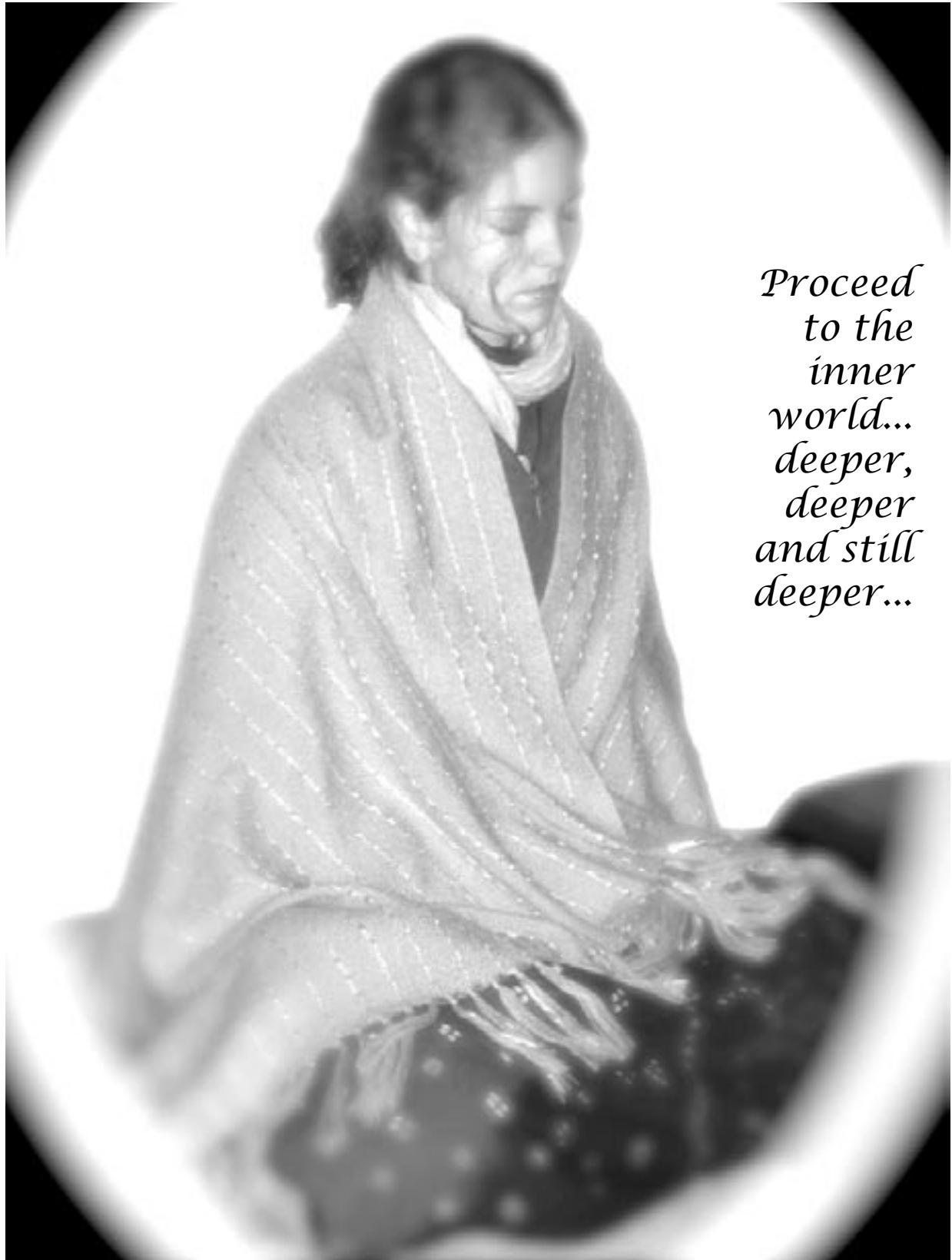


Pranam

ANANDA MARGA PRACARAKA SAMGRAHA SUVA SECTORIAL NEWSLETTER - WINTER 2006



*Proceed
to the
inner
world...
deeper,
deeper
and still
deeper...*

Baba Stories • News • Activities • Poetry • Photos • Articles

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Pranam

is produced by Ananda Marga Pracarka Samgraha Suva Sector 2006. Edited and designed by Narada Muni and Kamala. Photos by Aniish and Kamala.

Email material for Pranam to:
Tvk N'arda Muni

Dancing on the dam wall, Your tandava
Obliterates the dark
And stuns the storm wind.

Dancing on the dam wall, I call Your name
As the legs begin to mutter and the ankles howl
That they're getting to old for this.

Dancing on the wall, suddenly You come
And I lose myself until the body gives out finally
And the wind starts breathing again
Under the shuddering stars.

-- Gurucharan

"No one should feel disconcerted about anything. All should know that He is concerned about their welfare. Just as parents are concerned for their child, so is He even more concerned for each of His children. Therefore, do not be afraid or perplexed under any circumstances. I have told you that you are never alone in this world - the Entity that guides the stars guides you also."

-Baba

Editorial

Recently I had a dream where I was presenting a slide show of Ananda Marga. As I was watching the images of Ananda Marga Baba's photos started to appear. What was wonderful about them was that I had never seen these photos of Baba before. HE looked so beautiful and I was enjoying seeing Him.

Then the photos turned into a film of Baba. In other words Baba came alive. I was now watching Baba walking about meeting margiis! Then Baba appeared amongst a large group of children. The children were all very happy to see Baba and were trying to get close to Him. Baba in turn was enjoying the attention. He looked towards me and gave me a big blissful smile! Then I woke up.

I have been reflecting on this dream and am starting to think how much Baba was enjoying being around the children. It occurred to me that Baba like us most when we have similar child like simplicity and openness. Indeed Baba once said :

” The most valuable treasures on the path of human progress are honesty, simplicity and spiritedness.”
(Ananda Purnima 1981)

Children are like that, honest, simple and spirited. There is little complex or gap between their outer-selves and inner self. What you see is what you get. And I believe Baba loves it when we are like this. This was reinforced to me with this Baba dream.

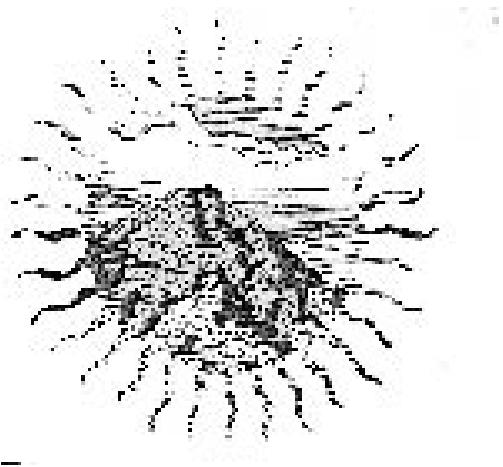
From the dream I could also see the importance of constant effort to get near Him. This is achieved by constant ideation on Him. Repeating our Ista mantra all day and performing second lesson are the practical methods Baba gave for this.

Sadhana, especially Dhyana, and kiirtan are other tools Baba gave. Baba always emphasised these and its never to much to be reminded of this:

“Instead of wasting their time in idle gossip, people should do kiirtan whenever they have time....People will have to conduct their life in such a way that their mundane duties are properly discharged without disturbing their spiritual practices, which is the goal of life...A Sadhadak...must remember that spirituality is the mainstream of life and everything else is peripheral to it. With the inspiration gain from sadhana, you can go on working in the mundane, supermundane and psychic spheres.”

Through our sadhana, kiirtana and ideation we please Baba and enjoy His loving closeness!

Tvt Na'rada Muni



“...the inner expression of Parama Purusa in the human ectoplasmic world is decidedly more sublime than His manifestation in the outer world. For He is drawing human beings, attracting them in their ectoplasmic (mental) world. He says: ‘Come along, come to me. You will have to come.’ Humanity cannot but respond to His irresistible call.”

by Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji

What is the Way?

by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

A bullock moving around and around grinding oil in a mill may trudge along for fifty miles or so, but has it really progressed in its journey? It is merely tied to an oil-pressing machine.

Regarding the definition of yoga, it is said that *yogashcit-tavrtnirodhah* - the suspension of all mental propensities is yoga. *Hat'ha* yoga is another name for such yoga. Suppose people suspend their mental propensities by artificial methods, by stopping the activities of their nerves. Will that help in attaining God-realisation? When people fall asleep, their mental activities remain suspended - does sleep help in attaining Brahma? Hence, this is also not the correct approach. The logic that the suspension of mental propensities leads to supreme spiritual attainment is also false.

Still others say, *Sarvacinta'paritya'go nishcinto yoga ucyate.*" Various thoughts are constantly emerging from the human mind which drive people virtually mad. In sorrow people may suddenly burst out crying; or sometimes sleeping children while watching a football game in a dream, cry out, "Goal, goal!" and may even unconsciously kick those sleeping beside them. Now if all one's thoughts are foregone as happens during sleep can that be called yoga? When one continues to think during sleep, it is called 'dream', and when in slumber the mind is freed from all thoughts, it is called 'sleep'. Can the state of sleep be called yoga? Certainly not.

There is yet another interpretation of yoga: *Sam'yoga yoga ityuktah jiiva'tam'a Parama'tmanah* - when the unit consciousness and the Supreme Consciousness become one, it is called yoga. Now, how to bring about this unification? Mere theoretical assertion will not help; something practical has to be done. What is that something? Some people observe that if true knowledge is aroused, the goal will be automatically realised. But how to arouse true knowledge? One may acquire various types of knowledge in art, science, literature, medical science, engineering, or agriculture. Suppose people have attained knowledge in one of these subjects, will they attain God-realisation thereby?

In the scriptures knowledge is divided into two categories, *vidya'* and *avidya'*. What we learn for the proper progress in the mundane and mental levels is termed *avidya'*. *Avidya'* cannot be altogether rejected, for in order to serve humanity *avidya'* is also necessary. But *avidya'* has no end, no limit. Take for instance the case of a great scholar in Geography. Geography comes within the scope of *avidya'*. [The science of spirituality is called *vijina'na* or "special knowledge" in *Sam'skrta*. What people usually call "science" is not *vijina'na*, it is *avidya'* or mundane knowledge. Suppose a person claims to be a great scholar, an authority in Geography, and you ask him, "Well, sir, you are certainly a great scholar in Geography. Can you tell me how many ants live in such-and-such city?" - certainly he cannot reply correctly. Thus it is

"Oh spiritual aspirant, do not desire to be a philosopher, or an intellectual - become a devotee. Be one with Parama Purus'a, and make your existence meaningful in all respects through constant service and devotion to Him."

observe that mundane knowledge is never perfect. Had mundane knowledge been perfect, kings and emperors would never have died - their royal physicians would certainly have cured them of all diseases. It is indeed strange that a physician who is a specialist in heart diseases dies of heart trouble! The reason lies in the imperfection of mundane knowledge. In fact, human knowledge is always imperfect. Then how will human beings attain spiritual knowledge? In reply it is said,

*A'tmajina'm' vidurjina'nam'
jina'na'nya'na'ni ya'ni tu
Ta'ni jina'na'vabha'sa'ni
sa'rasys naeva bodhana't.*

Self-knowledge is the true knowledge, and all other knowledges are the mere shadows of knowledge that do not give the exact idea of reality. Then what is the solution? There is only one way applicable to all, which is the recognised path. Those *jina'niis* who follow the path of knowledge are misguided fools. Whether people have a philosophy or not, whether they have good qualities or not, they are all the children of Parama Purus'a, part and parcel of Him. How great, how vast is the ocean, but how small, how insignificant in comparison is a drop of water! Yet that drop of water is a

part of the ocean: it resides in the bosom of the vast ocean. In the same way, human beings are also part of Parama Purus'a; they are His progeny. He is the Supreme Lord of all.

Now if the same humans address Parama Purus'a with appropriate humility, saying, "Oh Lord, show us the way, take us to Your feet and allow us to sit on Your loving lap" - this is devotion. If this devotion is present, everything else will automatically take care of itself. What is the value of so-called intellect? "Between me and my Lord, there cannot be any other entity" - when people proceed with this straightforward idea, this is devotion. Beyond that nothing else is important. That is why I say, "Learn the secrets of intuition-al practice and move accordingly." This alone is sufficient.

I have said that the Lord is very fond of kiirtana, so do kiirtana whenever you find time. Remember, all people in the universe want to realise Him, to take their seats on His lap. In each and every human being, this is the innate tendency. Now the question is, will those who take the ideation of Parama Purus'a think that there are thousands of other people who also want to sit on His lap as they are doing? No in this regard also there are different categories of devotees. The devotees of the lowest category think, "As Parama Purus'a belongs to all, so certainly He belongs to me as well because I am one of the multitude." Thoughts of this type are not very congenial for one's spiritual progress.

The second category of devotees is slightly better than this. They think, "Parama Purus'a is mine, and thus He must belong to others also." That is, the devotees of both categories have no hesitation in sharing Parama Purus'a

with others. But the devotees of the highest category think, "Parama Purus'a is mine only and He belongs to no one else." This is the sign of an excellent sa'dhaka, and the spiritual progress of this category is inevitable. "He is mine and mine alone and He does not belong to anyone else" - this assertion is undoubtedly true.

Now in each and every person there is an 'I' feeling, the small 'I' of an individual. Similarly there is a great 'I' also in every person and that great 'I' is Parama Purus'a. He is not an object of a distant heaven for human beings. People are always preoccupied with their small 'I's and thus there is no limit to their afflictions. But if they concern themselves with their great 'I' they will have no problem whatsoever: they can overcome all afflictions. Therefore it is but natural that human beings will want to come in the closest contact with Parama Purus'a to sit near Him, to sit on His loving lap. But how to do it? This produces a little diffidence in the human mind. People think, "Although Parama Purus'a is mine, yet He is so great, so vast that it is well nigh impossible to measure or fathom Him. He is the very embodiment of infinite knowledge and wisdom - how can a very ordinary person like me understand or realise Him?" This is simply a form of inferiority complex.

Yes, it is true that Parama Purus'a is very vast and human beings are very small and insignificant in comparison. But it is also true that Parama Purus'a is the nearest relation of human beings. Suppose a scholar has his Master's Degree in at least twenty subjects, but his son does not have even elementary knowledge. Will his illiterate son not approach his learned father? Certainly he will, because there is between them the

sweet relationship of father and son. Thus there is no room for any inferiority complex.

Human beings love Parama Purus'a and He loves human beings: this love is always mutual, not unilateral. So what should human beings offer to Him? He lacks nothing. When He is the creator of this entire universe, then He is the proprietor of all the wealth of the universe. So what can human beings offer Him? The only way to please Him is to serve the universe, to serve the entire living world, because everything is His creation. During the act of service, lower-grade devotees have the ideation, "I am serving Parama Purus'a in order to derive great satisfaction from my service." But the higher grade sa'dhakas take the ideation, "I am serving Parama Purus'a not to derive pleasure, but because Parama Purus'a Himself will be pleased thereby. I am not serving Him for my own pleasure - my only desire is to give joy to Him." Those whose very nature is to give joy to Parama Purus'a is gopii bha'va in the Vaes'n'ava scriptures. According to the scriptures, those who are genuine devotees do not do anything for their own pleasure: they do everything for His satisfaction, and they get much more pleasure by serving Parama Purus'a than even He gets. You should always remember, Maha'jano yena gatah sah pantha'.

You should emulate the example of those devotees who have genuine love for Parama Purus'a who are ever ready to do everything to give joy to Him.

Oh spiritual aspirant, do not desire to be a philosopher, or an intellectual - become a devotee. Be one with Parama Purus'a, and make your existence meaningful in all respects through constant service and devotion to Him.

26 February 1971, Jammu

Jamalpur DMS, March 2006

J A M A L P U R
DHAMRA MAHA
S A M M E L A N
was held on 25th
and 26th of March at
Jamalpur. Margiis
of Bhagalpur and
Jamalpur received
Revered Purodha
Pramukha Dadaji,
Ac Shraddhananda
Avadhuta with
traditional
K a o s h i k i
and Tandava

performance with
slogan shouting 'Ananda
Marga Amar Hai' etc. On 22nd,
23rd and 24th, there was RDs
of Delhi Sector Dadas and
Didis. General Secretary Ac
Dhruvananda Avadhuta and
Central workers reviewed the
progress of Delhi sector. At
the same time the date and
places of May programs were
declared.

The local print and electronic
media covered widely the
programs of DMS with special
feature on 'Life of Baba'. In
DMS, on Saturday the 25th,
there was a procession led
through the streets of Munger
which culminated in the
Central Town Hall of the city.
Public meeting describing the
importance and glory of Siddha
Mantra "Baba Nam Kevalam"
followed the procession. The
gathering was addressed by
Jayprakash Bhai from Etah,
U.P.

Evenings all through



the DMS was filled with
inspirational and devotional
RAWA programs featuring
cultural aspects based on
Prabhat Samgiita. The
President Ac Svarupananda
Avadhuta conveyed the
message of our Purodha
Pramukha Ac. Shraddhananda
Avadhuta on topics "Brahma
Samprapti" and "As Human
What Should We Do?" on the
26th March. On 25th March, he
covered the topics of "The Path
of Salvation" and "The role of
Guru".

The general Secretary, Ac
Dhruvananda Avadhuta and
other Central Dadas addressed
the ACB members, Bhakti
Pradhans, and Upbhakti
Pramukhas in the morning.
They explained the various
aspects of Marga including the
Good News to the gathering.

Importance of Margiis
involvement in legal cases
was also stressed upon. In the
afternoon of 26th Margiis went

for a tour of places connected
with Baba's physical presence.
In evening there a Dance-Drama
on Shiva and His contributions
to the human society by the
Children of Ananda Marga
school of Goda, Jharkhand.

In the night after PP Dada's
message Baba's video of
Varabhaya Mudra was shown
which charged the gathering
with immense devotion. Latest
edited Baba video of Dharma
Maha Cakra of June 1990 was
shown on large screen with
projector. Like Anandanagar's
December 2005 DMS, this
was also an unprecedented
gathering of around 9,000 to
10,000 people.

by Acarya Nigamananda Avt
Central PRS, AMPS

Magical Mini Mela !

We had a wonderful Magical Mid-year Mini Mela. About 35 of us gathered at Ananda Pali -- including quite a few people who had never been there, and a nice group of past Mela-ites. Ananda Pali looks very different in the winter time, and we were (just!) able to fit everyone inside for sleeping, making it a cozy atmosphere. The warm fireplace in the Ashram was a happy gathering place each evening, and despite people's concerns about chilly Stanthorpe, several people mentioned they weren't nearly as cold as they expected.

The cloudy weekend made a lovely backdrop for a more introspective energy, especially in the beginning. We had, perhaps, ten mothers attending without children and they were all happy for a quiet and restful feeling. This fit in nicely with our first program on "Surrender: The Art of Letting Go" which gave us a chance to share and think about this important aspect of spirituality.

As always, the Heart Circle workshop worked its magic. I am always amazed to watch the faces of people as they leave the room on the last day -- full of light and peace. The workshop on Building Wholistic Communities brought together a lot of interesting information and seemed to be very eye-opening about the work we need to do.

By evening on the first day, our group of 13 children had already prepared a very creative drama for us all to enjoy, topped off by some nice musical performances. At the end, the Mystic Journey video helped everyone move into the spiritual flow. On the next night, we shared spiritual stories and saw a beautiful presentation on the Ananda Marga children's home in Mongolia which was very moving.

Our second set of workshops were Journaling and Deepening

Your Meditation. In Journaling we moved through several writing exercises about releasing, to prepare us for some writing about our dreams in a creative way. Deepening Your Meditation workshop received comments of "excellent" and seems to have been very inspiring.

Of course the real magic of the Mela was as always the meditation and kiirtan, which continually deepened through the weekend. The children had a wonderful time, forming a close group and filling their days with beading and painting, soccer with Dada, an excursion and plenty of relaxed time to play. Comments on the food included: "Delicious! Exciting and really yummy!" and "fantastic!" -- which of course added to a general feeling of wellbeing for all.

In the end at the Closing Ceremony, the Mela Magic was apparent as always in the glowing faces and heartfelt comments around the circle. Some comments: "Beautiful Place, Beautiful People," "Wonderful Experience," and "Warm, friendly, accepting."

Thanks to the many volunteers who made our long and magical weekend a success!

by Kamala



Inspiration From India

by Ac Shilabhadrananda Avt

On my recent visit to India I was able to gather some Baba stories which I hope you will enjoy.

After Baba visited Timmern on His European tour of 1979, Baba told to the then SS Dada Karunanandaji: "My son, history may or may not remember you, but you can be satisfied for one thing—you have done something for the service of humanity". Baba told this to Dada after He had completed the first Kapalik initiation of a non-Indian, a Filipino acarya who was then posted in Venezuela.

I had the occasion to have a long chat with Raghu Da, who has been our accountant in Central Office since arriving in Tiljala in 1980. Raghu Da was a colleague of Baba in the Jamalpur railways accounts department. Raghu Da first joined the Eastern Railways in 1942 (whose jurisdiction stretched from Kolkata to Delhi in those days) and was posted in various places until in 1945 he was sent to Jamalpur. It was there that he met Baba for the first time. His desk was a few feet from Baba's. When you see Raghu Da you would be charmed by his innocence and simplicity. Yet he has so many experiences of Baba.

Even though Baba was not giving initiation in those days, his spiritual power was sensed by many people. The head of

the accounts department who was a close colleague of Baba's father had told to Raghu Da that "this young Prabhat Da has some hidden spiritual power". Ragu Da remembers Baba as a very reserved person, never given to gossiping or wasting time. He was always rotating His index finger around and Raghu Da saw that Baba was often in pensive and quiet mood.

Raghu Da recalls in those days that during the tiffin time, all of His colleagues would gather around Baba and request Him to tell them something. Invariably Baba would speak in detail about different flora and fauna and languages of the world, in far away places like the Amazon, etc.

One day in 1955, P.K. Chatterjee who was Baba's P.A. back then, approached Raghu Da and asked: "Do you want to see Anandamurtiji?" Raghu Da readily agreed. Pranay Da told him to reach the next morning at 8 a.m. at Baba's house. When Raghu Da reached at the appointed hour, Baba Himself opened the door and invited him inside speaking in His native Bamgla. Thereafter Baba Himself initiated Raghu Da.

Raghu Da attended the fist DMC in Rampur colony along with 25-30 other Margiis as he recalls. Raghu Da remembers the early years (50's-60's) when there was an intense unity within the Marga: family margiis and between acaryas—everyone would help the other if they were in need.

Raghu Da said that every year on the observation of Tilaka Puri (January 14) he would invite the Dadas to his house for meal like Dada Dhruvanandaji and Svarupanandaji.

Raghu Da would visit the Jamalpur Jagrti every Sunday where Baba would give His weekly sermons (discourses). In those days Baba used to say that: "Now you are seeing very few Margiis here in Jamalpur. But in future Ananda Marga will become a Global Mission with devotees in hundreds of countries of the world".

Raghu Da recalls one incident at the tiger's grave, wherein, one sadhaka was asked to lie on the ground and Baba put His foot on that sadhaka's chest. He asked: "Tell me what you are seeing". That sadhaka said that he was seeing a young boy Krsna with flute in hand on the banks of the Jamuna looking at the ladies who leaving their raiments on the nearby trees were bathing in the river!"

On another occasion in the Jamalpur Jagrti Baba had shown Raghu Da two skulls and asked him where they were from. Of course Raghu Da had no idea! Baba then touched Dasarath Dada and asked him to see to whom was this first skull. Dasarath Dada saw an African man walking in a forest and Baba affirmed that this skull was of that aboriginal of Tanzania. Baba then gave the power to Dasarath Da to see the second skull's previous life and it was that of a Brahmin who had been bitten by a snake. The villagers had placed his body on a raft and floated it in the river in the hope that he may recover from the snake bite which he never did.

On Baba's instructions Dada Shraddhanandaji approached Raghu Da in 1980 and requested him to work as accountant for Ananda Marga in Tiljala. Raghu Da told Dada that once his Farewell party in the office was over later that year, he would come to Tiljala which he did in September. The then GS Dada Sarveshvaranandaji presented a long list of duties for Raghu Da as given by Baba. When Raghu Da's family (he has 8 children!) complained that he should retire as he had already worked 38 years in Jamalpur accounts, Raghu Da requested them to allow him to continue to work as it was Baba's request. He said that he would visit them from time to time. Until today he is still with us managing the Mission's accounts in Ranchi.

Dada Arthapremanandaji recalls in one reporting session with Baba, He told: "I have given to GS and all of you SS's immense power. But remember the use of that power is abuse of the power". Another time Baba told: "SS and SOS are like two sides of one coin". Baba explained that the SOS in the office, is able to gather all of the information of the field and pass it on to the SS who is touring and would be able to make the necessary improvements.

Dada Svarupanandaji told that he joined AM when he was an MA student of Philosophy. He was from the same locality as Dada Cidghanandaji. Both wanted to serve Baba's Mission as WT. But one time Dada C's family came to Jamalpur to take Dada back home as they did not want him to leave the family. When he cleverly escaped home the second time, he took

WT training and was quickly dispatched to South India. When his family again came to Jamalpur looking for him, they could not find him. Around the same time Svarupanandaji requested Baba to allow him to become WT. Baba thought



a bit and said, "Who will take care of your family? One of you has to remain at home". Thereafter Dada's only brother Sujit Kumar got the first revolutionary marriage in AM. Shortly thereafter Dada took training and became WT. He was posted that time in Ananda Nagar.

Dada has perhaps the longest time serving in a single post as he was Principal of MIT College until 2002. He got his first posting order in that year, since he never received an official posting order from Baba when he was made Principal of MIT back in 1963.

One time when Baba was in Ananda Nagar, Dada was joking with Him: "Although Paramapurusa is perfect, I see you have made two imperfections in your creation". Baba was curious to know what were those two imperfections. Dada replied: "this world and also in your organization". Baba paused and replied to Dada: "Those are serious charges that you are leveling against me!"

One day Baba asked GS to provide him with a list of workers who have been in their postings for more than three years. About 20 names were handed to Baba. As Dada Svarupanandaji was reading the list out to Baba, He would immediately post the workers to different parts of India. When all were completed, Dada told Baba, "This list is incomplete". Baba asked: "How so?" Dada: "there is one person who is not in this list who has been in his post for twenty years and his name is Svarupananda". Baba replied: "There are two Margis who hold their posts for life—one is Svarupananda and the other is P.R. Sarkar".

"...in the realm of Dharma there should be clear cut injunctions in the form of Dharma shastra (scriptural treatise) and simultaneously there should be a strict guardian who during His lifetime time guides his self as well as others according to those scriptural injunctions. After his demise, He will live forever in his teachings which, although given for a particular age, will become a code of conduct for all time."

--Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

Summer Sectorial Conference 2006

The following are a few of the comments from the closing ceremony of the Summer Retreat 2006 at Ananda Palli. It was really a wonderful retreat:

"It was like going to see Baba. You see it in everybody's eyes..."

"I love Ananda Palli. I love coming here. I just want it to start all over again. It always surprises me how overwhelmed I feel by the amount of love I feel."

"Each year my sense of being part of this family increases..."

(teenager) "I feel very lucky to even be here. Its exactly where I needed to be. I feel renewed and inspired. Thanks everyone for making another beautiful retreat."

"My best experience was at 4:00 am in the all-night kiirtan and having that hard shell break open. I had a sense of the awesome power of the practice we do and what it can create in the world."

"I am leaving with the feeling that we can unitedly solve all our problems... It is inspiration I can bring back to my home."

"I came to the retreat with several questions about my personal life and baba provided the answers through my sisters and brothers here."

(teenager) "It put things back into perspective. Kiirtan has been fantastic, especially New Year's Eve."

(new person) "It was a last minute decision to come. I usually celebrate New Years by drinking and going to

night clubs. Now I'll do my best to change my habits. This place has got something special to it."

"Its been a hard time and a lovely time. I really appreciated the satsaunga."

"Our blissful family is being created right now."

Some highlights of the retreat were:

- Kiirtan, kiirtan and more kiirtan (thanks to Jyoshna!)
- A beautiful spiritual wedding of Lokesha and Maetreyii (who also did fantastic childcare!)
- Daily in-depth and enlightening study of the 16 points.
- Collective mosaic artwork with Jyoti
- Over \$1000 in publications sales



Winners:

Boys Tandava: Rainjan
Girls Kaoshiiki: Piiyusha
Boys Kaoshiiki: Manikya

Brothers Tandava:
Sukhadeva
Sisters Kaoshiiki: Janaki
Brothers Kaoshiiki:
Sukhadeva

Table Tennis Tournament
Winners: Vijaya and
Paunkaj
Childrens winner: Rainjan

Ananda Mela, January 2006



Fantastic kiirtan with our incredible kiirtan band.... Many initiations... 100 adults and 100 children!... Heart Circle (an amazing kiirtan process) was totally transforming... Secrets of Yoga -- a three day intensive course... Prout & Microvita Workshops... Candle Making, Laughter Yoga, Aboriginal Dance-- and the beautiful choir lead by Jyoshna singing Prabhat Samgiit... Over \$10,000 raised for Ananda Palli... fun and playful sports... Everything done by volunteers.... yummy food!

Everyone touched, inspired and dancing in bliss by the end!

AMURT'S ROLE IN THE GLOBAL RELIEF GAME

by Dada Shiilabhadrananda

The earthquake/tsunami of December 26, 2004 was notable for the widespread damage to death and property it caused over several countries. The response of humanity towards that disaster was also notable. It has become the largest funded relief operation in history with estimates of \$8 billion having been raised from all over the world.

AMURT has found a place in the ongoing relief and rehabilitation activities in Indonesia where the major share of the earthquake and tsunami's damage was felt. Our small team has learned much from the experience and is continuing to do so as we associate with some of the 180 NGO's in Indonesia to assist in the reconstruction of the Aceh Province in northern Sumatra Island.

I have had several insights about this operation as they relate to Ananda Marga and AMURT that I would like to share with the reader. I would also like to offer some suggestions about a possible future course of direction

for AMURT and perhaps for some other departments of our organization also.

It has been interesting to note the need for all the players involved in the relief operation to work together. This is in spite of the huge differences in outlook, background, education, customs and thinking patterns. We may roughly divide the various groups involved in the operation into two broad categories. One represents the local player, namely the Indonesian government and Indonesian NGO's. The other represents the international player, namely the international community composed of UN agencies, international NGOs and the governments of different countries as represented by their Embassies. Indonesia's outlook and paradigm is basically an "Eastern" one: family-centered, low technological approach, respect for tradition and authority and similar other characteristics. The international community represents (for lack of a better word) a "Western" one: system-centered, high tech approach, money-based solution to

problems, etc. There are wide gaps in perception between the two groups who are forced to work together to address the crisis of the disaster.

I see a similar situation in Ananda Marga Mission as a whole. We may use the contemporary phrase of a "work in progress" to accurately describe the ongoing evolution of our organization through all of its ups and downs. Baba wanted a beautiful blending of Eastern mysticism and Western science to create a new human culture. It is a long process. It requires much self-analysis and self-effort to break down hidden barriers of prejudice and assumptions about the colleague we are working with. In Ananda Marga he/she is not only our colleague, but something more—a fellow aspirant on the path whom we eat and live with! I am somewhat reassured to see that the daily struggles we have in forging the new synthetic society in our own organization, is parallel to the struggles faced by others who, maybe unknowingly, are moving towards the same goal.

By and large I have been





impressed with the tolerance and sincere attempts by the internationals to be sensitive to the customs and traditions of the Indonesian society and the similar respect shown by the Indonesians towards their overseas collaborators. One cannot help but be impressed by the acceptance and tolerance of multi-culturalism as a growing reality of the present society. It may become a trap for some of us Margiis when we become too "inward-looking", i.e. we easily identify our weaknesses which we know all too well, yet maybe don't realize that we have to constantly endeavor to overcome these defects just as others do outside of AM. We should not become discouraged by our seemingly slow rate of progress on these very deeply-imbedded personal issues that relate to samskaras and spirituality. And the more that we look outward and engage ourselves with non-Margiis we are challenged to test our own assumptions and beliefs against

reality. Slowly but surely we become the "seasoned devotee" that Baba expects us to be: one-pointed on Him, yet capable of rendering practical and useful service to the needy.

I have come to appreciate the uniqueness of our cadre. Baba has incorporated social service as an integral part of our sadhana system. Hence for an Ananda Margii, service is not dependant on any other incentive than the spiritual one. Our "Career volunteers" are admired by others in the NGO field, because of the dedication that such a job description stands for. Due to the pressures of family, many NGO workers cannot afford the luxury of working without a salary. Many times their contracts are for limited periods of time, simply because they wish to see their family and return back home where everything is familiar. Our cadres, though they may be lacking certain technical skills in regard to relief work, bring such a high level of sincerity to their

work that they earn the respect of their NGO colleagues.

I remember when we would convey to Baba some news of our relief activities in Africa back in the 1980's, one time He commented, "Let AMURT become bigger than the Red Cross". Of course the Red Cross is the first and largest relief organization in the world. I was told that they are even more than a relief organization—they have almost the same status as a government. They are commissioned by international law to ensure that the rules and regulations in the Geneva Convention signed by all countries about the treatment of prisoners of war, etc are obeyed by any country where they operate. So from a small relief organization that began in the late 1800's, it has grown to become a giant player in ensuring human rights are respected during times of disaster, man-made or natural.

Those who have been fortunate to do relief work have (continued on page 17)

"I have come to appreciate the uniqueness of our cadre. Baba has incorporated social service as an integral part of our sadhana system. Hence for an Ananda Margii, service is not dependant on any other incentive than the spiritual one."

Sectorial News

Expansion at the Ananda Marga River School

This year has opened with more expansion and plenty of good news in our 12th year. At the end of last year we realised not only did we need to add a new primary classroom, but that we also could move

ahead one year in our schedule to add a new "Prep" class in our early education area (in line with state requirements.) Now we finally have 7 classes for seven years of school (instead of mixed classes), plus three years of "preschool." The exciting part was receiving an unexpected government grant of US \$160,000 (!) to build and fit out the new prep classroom, after we had already budgeted and arranged loans to cover it ourselves. It felt like such a special kind of spiritual grace in the way it happened.

It was also a kind of spiritual experience to see our new buildings arrive on cranes through the air! This year for the first time, instead of renovating second-hand donated buildings, we were able to order buildings that were built off site, and then delivered to the school. A much faster and less stressful process! But of course they

arrived late -- during the second week of school. All the kids were on hand to see the buildings swinging through the air!

All told this last 12 months has brought US\$ 240,000 worth

of grants, including new play areas, new computer center, ceramic kiln and pottery wheels, and a beautiful new "art space" (open air and

fronting into rainforest!). We have also been so happy to hire our first two Margii teachers in this year, and they have been such a wonderful addition.

-- New year six teacher, Tara McPhail, and school director Prabha Demassonwill be traveling together to the NH Educator's Conference in Sweden. How wonderful that the school can support their trip. (Didi Tapomaya from Melbourne Pre-school and Anne Welch from the Blue Mountains will also come.)

-- On the last day of our school year in December, all the children pitched in to plant over 200 native rainforest trees near our creek (partially funded by more grant money!) What a beautiful sight! It was part of such a highly vibrated few days at the end of the year including great performances, and our usual deeply touching graduation ceremony. (It's always so beautiful to hear the deep feelings of our graduating class about their years at the River School.)

-- Various service projects



The River School "Inaugural Strings Concert" in June. The Cello and Violin students (including Dada and Prabha) performed with the first River School choir!

continue at the school such as year 1 students raising money with an art sale for poor children in India, year 3 students regularly visiting residents at a seniors' center, and all-school participation in the Walk Against Want.

-- At least ten River School families, and several teachers, attended the Ananda Mela festival. It was great for these families and teachers to have a blissful taste of a spiritual lifestyle, with daily meditation, kirtan and yoga, plus inspiring workshops. As one teacher commented, "It was nothing like I ever expected to happen on this earth. I am successfully blissed out!"

The Power of Guruvakyam

Every Monday morning begins with "All School Morning Circle" that includes a candle-lighting and blessing ceremony and uplifting songs. We also recently have added certificate presentations for children

who are examples of the various virtues we are studying.

This morning we sang a song that Dada recently taught the children called "Soon the Day

Will Come." (Written by Mohan Bagby about 20 years ago.) After the Circle our second grade teacher came up and asked to know more about that song. She said that while we were singing the words rang in her ear in a very special way, giving a deep spiritual feeling, but it stopped at the end of the song. We explained to her that the words from this song are exactly taken from a Baba quote! I felt it was an example of the power of Guru Vakyam (Guru's words.)

-- Kamala



Piyyusha designed this silk screen bag at the "Bridge Creek Festival" at the River School.

Wellington Region

A pracar strategy plan for the year 2006 has been formulated. Since March 2005 Yoga classes have been provided regularly at the Psychiatric Unit of Auckland Hospital. One participant has taken initiation.

A Revolutionary Marriage was conducted on Dec.19. 2005. This beautiful ceremony was

held in the Auckland Domain.

A successful retreat was held over new years, attended by thirty margiis.

An opening ceremony was held at a North Shore health centre run by Nityaprema January 2006.

A House Warming was conducted at the new home of Ranjit and Prema February 2006.

Ongoing meditation and Yoga classes are held twice weekly at the Auckland Jagrti.

Regular Dharma Cakra with Akhanda Kiirtan or Sadhana Shivir held on the first Sunday of every month.

Upcoming Meditation classes, Introductory lectures, one day seminars are advertised in the City Scene (A free event circular provided by Auckland City Council).

Christchurch

by Madhumita

We compiled a Meditation directory including 20 groups teaching meditation in Christchurch. 633 copies have been distributed and there is a website ready to go- we just need to find someone to host it for free. Once its up and running we'll turn it into a national meditation website. We've been checking out other spiritual groups.

We attend a monthly Kiirtan, organised by a Satyananda devotee. We sing lots of different mantras and the 30 souls there really make a strong spiritual vibration. People really enjoy our Baba Nam Kevalam mantra and many remember it from when margiis attended the 'Convergence'

Kiiran has started a website to encourage service amongst young people. Last year she arranged for 300 volunteers including 8 NZers to work in projects, mainly in

Africa and South America. This was in reaction to huge cost for people wanting to volunteer for social service projects around the world. Other organisations are thought to be charging up to \$1000+ per month, with the actual project seeing little of this money.

The university Yoga club went well last year with a strong bunch of regulars. It will start again soon.

***“Wherever
organisational
matters are
concerned, I am
physically there.
Don’t worry. You
go and do your
duty,***



Manikya models the new school shirt which has been very popular.

***Note: Please send any
updates on Marga activities
for future Pranams.***

***Also, if you need your
regular Good News “dose,”
remember you can subscribe
to Good News online on
Suva-GoodNews@
yahoogroups.com***

Baba Stories

HOW HE BRINGS US TO HIM

There was an Indian doctor who was not satisfied with merely being a routine doctor. He wanted to start a comprehensive relief program to provide health care for all of India. He knew that alone he could not do this, so he approached the government. Finding no interest there he wrote to all the religious organizations in India with social service programs. Among the people he wrote to was Baba at Lake Gardens. However he did not get any reply from any of them, including Baba. One afternoon when he was in Calcutta, he was walking down a road when he heard a car honking at him. He

walked over to the car and found that he was talking to the President of Ananda Marga - Baba!. Baba talked with him for some time, and then invited him to come along with Him in the car to discuss further. This man drove to Lake Gardens with Baba and then never ever left for many years. He got his acarya training in Lake Gardens, and also his first posting was in Lake Gardens. Once he was with Baba, he remained with Him.

There was a devotee in Bihar who was very upset that there was so much difficulty in getting Baba's contact. He thought to himself that, if I really am Baba's son, why should I have so much trouble in seeing my father?? He took a resolution that from now on he would not try to see

Baba; rather, he would wait and see if Baba would come to him and ask him to come with Baba. Just after this Baba was imprisoned. Many years passed.

Finally, in August 1978, Baba was released, and was once again with His devotees. Once when

Baba was on tour in 1978-79 in India, the driver was forced to take a smaller road. It just so happened that this road passed by that same margi's house who, years before, had decided to wait until Baba

came to him. When they came near the house, Baba ordered the driver to stop.

Then Baba told them to call this devotee and tell him that his Baba is here. The devotee came out, stunned to see Baba at his house. Baba then invited him to get into His car. The devotee shyly refused. Baba again asked him to come in the car. The devotee, with his head down, again refused. Baba then for a third time insistently asked to come in the car. The devotee refused, and Baba's car drove away, never to return.

Once a young Bihar boy was sent to Lake Gardens to see Baba. He had just been initiated and had no clear idea of Baba. Day after day Baba showered him with so much love. Finally one day Baba told him that he should go for

acarya training. This devotee was not interested in anything except Baba, and so he agreed to whatever Baba wanted. Then he went to the training center. After receiving so much love from Baba, the separation was nothing but pure torture. This devotee did not take part in any training. All he did all day long was cry, as his heart burst again and again at separation from Baba. Finally after two months, Baba called him to Lake Gardens and made him an acarya without taking any examination in the philosophy. This was his training—to cry for Baba. This training, just like being on fire, is what one needs if one is to be made into pure, hard steel of the true, selfless devotee.

"Day after day Baba showered him with so much love."

PAST LIVES

Once two Dadas were talking together. They were telling each other that since they had close contact with Baba, they must have been great people in their past lives. Sometime after this conversation, in a darshan, Baba called forward one of those two Dadas and asked him to do sadhana. Then he told him to see his past lives. To his shock, that dada saw himself as a rich capitalist in the last century who was a great exploiter. Then he saw himself in another life as a warrior who had slaughtered many people. The dada felt thoroughly chastened. Then, he saw himself as a man living during Lord Shiva's lifetime. A disciple of Shiva had initiated him, and he had done sadhana for just five minutes, and thereafter never again did sadhana.

For these five minutes of sadhana, he was graced in this life with Baba's contact – not with Krishna's.

Later on, the second Dada was also shown his past lives. He had led a very existence in all his lives, except during the time of Lord Shiva. At that time, he was Lord Shiva's chair!

AMURT

(from page 13)

always felt the tremendous spiritual blessings that come as part of the work. Relief work has numerous advantages that we can think of: serving the suffering humanity, learning new administrative and practical skills, learning to apply our spiritual disciplines in an appropriate manner during an emergency, developing the good name of His Mission, obtaining funds for the expansion of His Mission amongst others.

In this regard there have been suggestions that AMURT be given an even greater role in helping to establish His Mission. Baba created a new post of Global AMURT Coordinator back in 1987 as He realized the immense value of AMURT's contribution to the establishment of His Mission. He used to tell us that His Mission in Africa would be established through relief.

There are now efforts underway to develop a team of workers and Margiis from all corners of the globe who may be pressed into service on 24 hours notice when an international disaster breaks. For this AMURT should have ready emergency funds to meet the calamity. Baba wanted AMURT to be first on the scene in the event of any calamity. With the large number of natural disasters this year, it seems imperative to establish this global team immediately.

If the team is big enough, it would not put too much strain on any Sector who may have to sacrifice one or two workers or Margiis for a certain length of time. Moreover, rotation of the team could take place over the course of the operation so that nobody is missed for a long period of time from their original posting. An important consideration of the relief operation is the

decision to withdraw upon conclusion of the emergency phase or to continue assisting in the rehabilitation phase. Ideally the global team members could withdraw upon the completion of the short emergency phase (3 months) giving way to the local or national chapter to follow up with rehabilitation work, under the supervision of the AMURT Coordinator or AMURT Secretary of that Sector.

In a similar way, there are a growing number of workers and Margiis who have gained invaluable experience through working continuously on a specific project or activity over a prolonged period. The project may either be receiving funding from a non-Margii donor or it may have reached the stage where it is self-sufficient through its own resources. Amongst these projects, workers should also be moved around, so that they learn new skills in managing for example a school, clinic, coop, yoga centre, community garden or whatever is the core project. Alternatively they may repeat their original success in a new place while teaching their colleagues how they have done it. There should be a constant effort to utilize the valuable experience of a worker/Margii who has been able to achieve the difficult objective of attaining self-sufficiency (i.e. sustainability) in a project. Like the system of "each one teach one" and "multiplier effect".

This is certainly not a new idea. It is part of His organizational system that workers get transferred in the course of their worker life to hone their skills, expose themselves to different cultures and develop more spiritual surrender as His Missionary. What to speak of AMURT, Baba's idea was that many of His departments would be able to take on such a vast jurisdiction over the course of decades. AMURT seems to be ahead of the rest and could set the example for others to follow.

We see good examples of these projects in our Departments of Education, Children's Homes, Master Units and Prachar. While AMURT has achieved some semblance of a global character, other departments should also grow this outlook and constantly gather and share the invaluable experiences of their cadres for the benefit of all.

Given the dedication of our WT's, the magnanimity of His vision for service, the growing wealth of experience of our workers and Margiis in different fields of service and the global reach of His organization, it is time now to share more of that knowledge base so that incoming cadres can benefit from them. I see the bright possibility of AMURT attaining the status that Baba had for it with all of the positive results that such an expansion would bring. By our coordinated action we can bring that auspicious moment earlier for the benefit of the entire Universe.

There are now efforts underway to develop a team of workers and Margiis from all corners of the globe who may be pressed into service on 24 hours notice when an international disaster breaks.

A Baba Dream

by Kamala

It was a mundane day filled with mundane duties, but I had such a sweet Baba dream that I woke up in the middle of the night remembering it clearly.

Baba was visiting California. He was staying in a house or jagriti and I had the pleasure of sitting alone with him during a quiet moment. The strongest memory of the dream was how absolutely comfortable it was to sit there with Him -- I felt absolutely contented. I didn't mind what he spoke about, and I didn't feel at all shy or concerned about what I might say.

Baba mentioned how bad the racism was he had seen. He also was noting how nobody understood who Krishna really was. (there was a mental feeling that Baba was suggesting that the Hari Krishna movement had given completely the wrong idea.) Then Baba commented that racism (against Black Americans) was all the worse because "Krishna Himself was black." (I had the image that Krishna was very dark black-skinned.)

I mentally thought to myself that here I disagreed with Baba, but it was okay. I thought racism was bad anyway. But Baba was implying that particularly we should not treat Black people badly because Krishna was that color. Baba seemed so angry about this situation that I said, "But Baba, I did not cause this." And he looked at me with complete sweetness, and said, "No, you did not."

It was getting close to a mealtime. Baba commented that there are many hungry people nearby. I couldn't think who he meant. The image came to my mind of some teenage hooligans who I had met in an alley in an earlier dream. Baba showed me that these young people who seemed just to be causing trouble were also hungry -- and required our service.

Then it was time for the meal and many brothers came in to sit around the table. I felt disappointed that my private, intimate and happily contented time with Baba was over.

I have seen Your smile
And met Your eyes
Sung to You and heard the
music of Your voice
But those days have gone.

I have lain before You
And touched
Your cherished feet
And caressed them
But those days too have gone.

I have held Your hand
And talked to You
And felt Your fingers
on my face
And even too Your hands
upon my head in blessing
But all those days have gone.

And even though deeply in
sweet Dhyana
I have dived into You and felt
You all around and in me

So that my very
atoms dance insanely.

I miss You
and those warm Calcutta nights
When sweet and laughing
You walked in Your garden
And eased the hopeless
longing of my heart.

Gurucharan

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As Soon As You Think of Me

When the emergency was over and Baba was released, one Dada was on his way to meet him. His train went via jamalpur on its way To patna. In jamalpur, he was sitting near the train window and a brother saw him and recognized him due to his orange dress. The brother saluted him and asked:

“Dada, are you on your way to see Baba?”

“ Yes”, he replied.

“ Kindly convey my pranam to Baba. I was his childhood friend”. He then mentioned his name to Dada.

When Dada arrived in Patna, he sat with Baba along With many others. One day passed, but the dada did not get an opportunity to say anything to Baba. The next day, while sitting with Baba, baba asked him: “which route did you take to come here ?”

“ Baba, I came via Jamalpur”. And then he remembered and said. “ One brother from Jamalpur gave his pranam to you, Baba”. With Folded hands Baba received the salutation and asked. “ What was his name?”

Dada said: “ Baba he has very little hair on his head and he said he was your childhood friend. I forgot his name, though he told me”.

Baba replied: “ You see, I have spent my childhood days in Jamalpur, so I have many childhood friends there. They are now all aged and have less hair also, so how can I know the name of this person ?”

Dada could not remember. Then Baba told him: “ Come nearer, touch my toe”.

When Dada touched Baba’s feet, Baba asked: “ Is his name R. K. Mandal ?”

Dada replied: “ Yes Baba, Yes Baba.”

Then Baba smiled and said: “ Look, his hand is very Powerful. The moment he touched my feet, I remembered the name. All of You should keep his powerful hand in your pocket”. Everybody laughed.

Then Baba said: “ He had given his pranam the day before Yesterday at noontime, right?”

“ Yes Baba”.

Baba then said: “ You know, the moment he conveyed to you His pranam, I received it right away. I am mentally always with you. Anybody who thinks of me, at that same moment, I come to know it”.



Devoting your thoughts to us
they know that the love is with them
always protecting them ~Baba!

“I will do exactly as He wants, I will colour my mind with His colour, and I will not think whether that will bring joy to me or not. Let Him be pleased...that is my only wish”

This is the highest stage of devotion.”

~Baba

